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REVIEWS

The Psychology of Religious Experience. By EDWARD SCRIBNER AMES. Houghton Mifflin Co., 1910. Pp. XII+428. \$2.50.

This is the most comprehensive treatise on the psychology of religion that has yet appeared. It deals not merely with the religious experience of the individual but also with psychological aspects of the genesis of religion in the race and its status in modern society. The standpoint is rather obtrusively "functional," and to one not used to this method of thinking, the interpretation of religion in terms of activity may seem to be very little akin to psychology.

The book begins with a history of the psychology of religion. The motives leading to this type of treatment are four: First, there is the motive of pure science which regards all aspects of experience as its legitimate material. Second, considerations of practical religion have led to a demand for a psychological study of the processes of religion, and directed that they may be better controlled. Third, the study of comparative religion has also created a demand for such an examination of the psychical basis of religion as a basis for explaining the endless diversity of types as well as appreciating their underlying unity in being religious at all. Last, there is an increasing need felt on the part of the philosophy of religion and theology for an interpretation in the parlance of science of the concepts of faith, inspiration, knowledge, personality, free-will, evil, etc.

The psychological standpoint is next explained. Functional psychology starts with an examination of the native needs and impulses, the circumstances of their appearance, their function in the rest of the experience of the individual or of the race. Its emphasis is throughout upon activity and adjustment as the common denominators of diverse psychological states. The genetic problem is consequently prominent in this study of religion. From such a point of view it will be seen that religion is not an absolute or fixed affair but that it exists in various grades and types or, even, not at all in some persons.

The basic impulses of primitive religion are said to be social and economic. A number of illustrations are given to make clear this social and economic determination. It seems to the reviewer, however, that the author does not clearly demonstrate any fundamental genetic

relation between religion and this social background. He leaves it about where it has been left by many other writers by saying that religion reflects the fundamental life-experiences of man, the impulses of sex and of food.

In the satisfaction of these basic impulses, social customs develop, and as these customs become firmly fixed they come to be regarded as sacred and variations are looked upon with dread. This is offered as the origin of taboo. The act tabooed is the act which departs from custom. The theories of taboo held by Frazer, Jevons, and Crawley are acutely criticized on the ground that they stop short of a real genetic account. The author's position is suggestive, but even the sympathetic reader is apt to feel that the roots of the idea of taboo may be more complex than this. However that may be, the older writers undoubtedly referred too much to ideas and logical categories and failed to credit the predominate influence of a consciousness which is prevaillingly motor.

Religious ceremonies are said to have a social origin—to be, in fact, social reactions. They are essentially public in character and center about social interests, for example, the phenomena of nature, birth, initiation, marriage, death, burial, war, etc. Religious ceremonies are both magical and spiritistic as are all the activities and interests of the savage. Hence the presence or absence of these qualities cannot be used to delimit religion from what is commonly called magic or from any other types of primitive action.

The author gives a large number of the common illustrations of magical practices but makes no satisfactory attempt to relate them genetically to instinctive reactions. Merely to classify them as imitative, as direct, or as sympathetic magic does not carry us beyond previous discussions.

The intellectualistic conception of spirits is properly criticized as based upon the impossible condition of a highly organized self or personality in the savage. Spiritistic conceptions emerge within and symbolize the great interests of life. Whatever attracts attention and is useful for attaining an end is suffused with power and vitality, i.e., it has a spirit. All objects are spirits and all spirits are objects at the first. The next stage is that of the separation of the spirit from the object. Growth and objectification of the god goes hand in hand with the social experience and achievements of the social group or nation. The life of the tribe is registered in its sacred objects.

The theory of sacrifice is based on that of Robertson Smith, namely, that it originates in the communal meal. It becomes a suggestive and

mimetic drama, developing in the group an intense emotional state and serving to renew and consolidate its life. Its efficacy is supposed by the savage to depend upon the magic potency of divine food. By partaking of a sacred object one may become possessed of its sanctity. The view here presented will doubtless hold good of many sacrificial practices but it is not clear that it will explain all. It also seems to the reviewer that magic potency needs further analysis and relation to other aspects of savage belief and practice.

Prayer, the author holds, occupies a subordinate place in primitive religion; although dependent upon the development of language it does not point to a highly organized concept of personality or of self. It is a social habit, not based at first upon any theory of the nature of the object addressed but finding its satisfaction immediately as impulsive expression. In ceremonials, speech, song, prayer is often quite incidental to other parts of the ceremony, i.e., they are merely descriptive. Later, prayer is regarded as having actual power. It does work, it has magical influence. At a still later stage these magical aspects disappear and prayer partakes rather of meditation and communion. This account is very suggestive, although it seems more weight might have been attached to spontaneous social intercourse in even the early development of prayer.

The prevailing theories of mythology are criticized on the ground that they attribute too sophisticated notions to the savage. The mythology of a people is simply "that body of tradition which is most closely associated with the ceremonials." It is dependent upon the play of fancy rather than on any rational action; "yet it furnishes the psychological *milieu* within which the dramatic action lies."

With reference to the development of religion, it is seen to depend upon the development of social interests. As these become larger, more elaborate and refined, and richer in traditions, religion acquires a more aesthetic ritual and a more moralized conception of life. Changes in the social and economic structure of society bring corresponding changes in the religion of a people. This proposition is traced out in detail in the case of the ancient Hebrews.

The author now turns to the problems of how the organized social values of religion are appropriated by the individual and to the analysis "of the psychological phenomena they produce in the individual life." A useful résumé of the religion of the child is given. At first it is external. The little child is non-religious and non-moral. He is lacking in developed social attitudes and hence cannot fully appreciate religious

impulses and motives. The development of the social consciousness in the adolescent makes that age the pre-eminent time for religious unfoldment. Normal religious development is one of gradual growth rather than of sudden emotional changes, although at certain periods of adolescence strong emotional experiences cannot be considered abnormal.

Religion arises naturally, being an inherent and intimate phase of the social consciousness. No fundamentally different psychological factors are found in different religions. The differences are rather those of degree, of morality, of method, and of ideality.

The contributions of the psychology of religion to religious education are summarized as follows:

1. The child is not by nature bad or irreligious; he is spontaneous, active, selective, and capable of appropriating social values with which he comes in contact.

2. His education must be more than intellectual, more stress must be placed on the acquisition of habits and social initiative and the development of interests and emotions.

3. His interests are primarily in activities and in controlling things close at hand. This should furnish the basis of religious training.

4. His religious development will be apt to be epochal and yet continuous.

5. The educational process in religion as well as in other lines may be carried far beyond the adolescent years.

A concise discussion and criticism of revivalistic methods seeking to induce conversion by hypnotic influence and by unbalancing the normal emotional life follows.

As to the place of religion in the experience of the individual and of society, it is stated that it makes for a co-ordination and development of the entire psychical life of the individual. It does not develop new psychical attitudes, e.g., in faith, prayer, etc., nor is the subconscious self the peculiar organ of religion.

The current reaction against the extreme intellectualism of the older psychology is noted. Ideas are no longer regarded as primary but originate in instinctive and habitual types of activity. This new point of view has important bearings upon the nature and truth of religious ideas. They are functional rather than absolute in their nature. Nor does feeling have absolute value, but it is normal only as associated with action.

As to the religious genius, he is not different in kind from other

geniuses: like them he has unusual mental endowments, the capacity for making ready use of materials at hand, and he is profoundly saturated with the social consciousness.

Man possesses no innate religious instinct but only capacities which may or may not be developed into religious attitudes. The non-religious individual is recognized as a possibility under the conditions of modern society, i.e., people of various types who do not participate in any definite way in the ideal values of the social consciousness. Religious sects form a transition stage in the development of modern society. They are responses to particular human needs but are all more or less partial, representing partitions in the social consciousness. Society, however, is larger in its needs than any sect and there is a present need of denominations passing beyond these limited historic functions and participating "more fully with scientific awareness and efficiency in the highest ideals of the whole race."

The essential relation between religious aspiration and the ideals of democracy and of science is last of all treated. The author sees in this relation new possibilities of religious development for the future.

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The Mind of Primitive Man. A Course of Lectures Delivered before the Lowell Institute, Boston, Mass., and the National University of Mexico, 1910-11. By FRANZ BOAS. New York: Macmillan, 1911. Pp. x+294. \$1.50 net.

This series of essays presents the author's American colleagues with a convenient summary of his views on the fundamental problems of his science, views that have molded in large measure the development of anthropological thought in this country and have proved one of the greatest stimuli to anthropological research. However, it is precisely for this reason that the foremost service of the work lies in bringing that substantial body of ethnological doctrine before a larger public—before European anthropologists, who still seem strangely unfamiliar with the principal conceptions developed on American soil, and, above all, before that even wider circle of sociologists, historians, philosophers, and what not, who have hitherto been obliged to draw their anthropological data from sources either classical but antiquated, or modern in date but hopelessly out of touch with the recent trend of thought.

Professor Boas' theme in the book before us is the race problem.